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OF
LORD DUNRAVEN
AT
LIMERICK,
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SPEECH OF LORD DUNRAVEN AT LIMERICK.

MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN—

We are met here to-day in a very critical moment in the history of our country—perhaps the most critical that it has ever passed through—and we have a very solemn duty to perform towards her, and towards ourselves. We, Irishmen, who are filled with the profound conviction that our civil and religious liberties and rights will be seriously jeopardised by the Repeal of the Union, are met here to protest against the most iniquitous measure ever sought to be imposed upon free men. We who believe, we who know, that the material welfare of our country, and her industrial prosperity, is inseparately bound up with the preservation of the Legislative Union that now exists between Great Britain and Ireland, are here assembled to make our voices, our sure convictions, and our determination heard in the only constitutional way open to us.

We have no direct representation in the House of Commons. Our opinions are represented, most ably represented, by members returned for other portions of Ireland, but as far as this county, and the South and West are concerned, we have no direct representation of our views in the House of Commons. The Unionist voice is silent in that chamber ; but it will not be silenced. We can by meetings, by petitions, and by resolutions give evidence of the faith that is in us, and make our fixed resolve known to the Legislature, the constituencies, and the electorate of Great Britain ; and that we intend to do.

WHO ARE THE MINORITY?

We are in a minority, but that minority is, numerically, of a size that entitles it to be heard ; and it is a minority which, when you consider the elements of which it is composed, and its constituent parts, deserves and must command great consideration and respect.

It is usually supposed by the constituencies of Great Britain that Unionism in the South is the political creed of a few fanatical country gentleman—an utterly false conception of the situation diligently put forward by the advocates of appeal. It is not true. Consider that petition against Repeal signed by many Roman Catholics of position in the country, and by numbers of their co-religionists. Look at this great meeting—of what is it composed ? Both religious creeds represented on this platform, and representatives of all classes and creeds in the body of the hall. It is absurdly false to pretend that devotion to the Union burns in the breasts of

country gentlemen and Protestants alone. And what about the country taken as a whole ? By far the greater part of the industrial population of Ireland—that is to say, the population engaged in manufacturing industries, is on our side. It is no exaggeration to say that property, the foundation of prosperity in any community, and capital that started our industries and keeps them alive is on the side of Union ; and we can fairly claim a practical monopoly of the cultivated intelligence of the country. It is absurd to suppose that a minority so constituted ought not to receive more attention than it is entitled to by its mere numbers because it comprises within its ranks all the qualities, characteristics, and elements, which are essential to the well-being and which combine to create prosperity in any community. And our numbers are not insignificant. We are far stronger merely numerically than is currently supposed, and no man who knows anything of the condition of the country would pretend to deny that our numbers would receive an immense accession of strength if the farmers and the labourers dared to speak out. But, alas, they dare not. They understand and know and dread the organisation below the surface most carefully concealed from the electorate of Great Britain by the subterfuges of the Government. They feel, and regret, the difference between the firm and just grasp and administration of the law by the late Government, and the trembling and uncertain touch of those who, to the misery of Ireland, have succeeded them in office. Public opinion is not free in the South and West. It is intimidated, coerced, and gagged, and the Executive Government, to their infinite shame, condone the intimidation. Still some men have dared to speak out, and I greatly honour them for doing so. Animated by a strong sense of duty to their country, they have spoken out their minds at an undoubted risk to themselves. They are brave men, and I honour them.

MR. MORLEY'S PETTY SPITE.

I cannot help thinking that the growing strength of feeling in favour of the Union in the South is creating considerable uneasiness in the minds of the party who advocate repeal ; in the minds of those ingenious gentlemen who manufacture public opinion for exportation to England. It has been seriously alleged in the House of Commons by three honourable members, all of whom have been convicted of conspiracy and practicing intimidation, that landowners are compelling their tenants and labourers to sign the Petitions against the Bill. If the occasion were not so solemn, I might truthfully say so tragic, there would be something irresistibly comic in the idea of men who for years have tyrannised over and intimidated their countrymen, getting up without a smile on their faces in the House of Commons, and pretending that the ferocious landlord, brandishing evictions, and hurling writs, is abroad in the land, bullying those unfortunate slaves, his labourers and tenants, into signing Petitions against their will. And there is something very sad in the meek acquiescence of the Chief Secretary in the unwarrantable insinuation of his political allies—an insinuation which he had

no reason, whatever, to suppose contained a single grain of truth in it. What did he say? That he did not know anything at all about the matter, but thought it very likely. If he did not know anything at all about it, what right had he to say anything at all about it? If he did not know, well it was his duty to have known. He might, perhaps, be excused for thinking that owners of land would do such a dishonourable thing if they could, for doubtless he considered that all Irishmen were of the same complexion as his political allies. But as a reasonable man he cannot think that landlords can afford the luxury of evicting tenants for political motives. Eviction is an expensive process, and landlords are not in very affluent circumstances, as Mr. Morley well knows; and he must be perfectly well aware that even if a landlord wished to do such a thing, and could afford it, he has absolutely no power whatever in the matter. I was pleased to see this ebullition of spite—glad to note this absurd attempt to discount the value of public opinion—because it proves positively that the supporters of this iniquitous Bill are finding the ground growing very shaky under their feet, and are beginning to perceive that the class of small owners and occupiers of land have more sense and more courage than they gave them credit for. Yes, we are in a minority, it is true, but it is a strong one; strong, and growing stronger every day in numbers; strong in the elements composing it; strong in the strength and sincerity of the motives that actuate it; strong in the certainty of ultimate success, and I am glad to have the honour of participating in a meeting such as this, so thoroughly representative of that minority; assembled to set out our unalterable opposition to the subject matter of this Bill.

AN UNWORKABLE BILL.

What is the nature of the issue before us? Nothing less than the dismemberment of the United Kingdom. It is proposed to tear up the instrument by which, in the opinion of a large minority in Ireland, their civil and religious rights and liberties alone can be secured. A Bill is before the House of Commons of the most perplexing and complicated kind. A Bill full of absurdities and anomalies, of simulated safeguards, and restrictions so rotten that they are not even worth considering. A Bill utterly unworkable, dangerous in every clause, revolutionary in every line. A Bill which proposes to deprive us of our birth-right, to rob us of a constitution which we passionately love; to take from us rights to which we have an inalienable claim; rights to which we were born, and which we will not abandon as long as we have life. A Bill which seeks to break up the Union that we hold to be essential to our material prosperity, to narrow down our nationality, and to transfer our allegiance from the Parliament and the laws and the constitution to which we cling to a constitution and a legislature which we will never accept.

Never before has a treachery so gratuitous been contemplated; never has a proposal so contrary to the essence of constitutional government, so intolerable to the natural rights of men, been

formulated by responsible ministers. Of course, nations have before now been broken up under the stress of some great national calamity, such as the shock of a great and disastrous war; but never before in the history of the world has dismemberment been deliberately proposed to a people free to act, never before has a nation been asked to cast adrift a population loyal in its allegiance, and protesting vehemently against the unjust cruelty of divorce. Well, gentlemen, what, under these circumstances, is it our duty to do? As Irishmen, and as I claim patriotic Irishmen, it is our duty to look most critically into this matter; we must strip from it all the fanciful flights of oratory and the mere verbiage that clothes it; we must turn off the coloured lime lights that disguise the true proportions and details of the Bill, and look at this bundle of anomalies, absurdities, and enormities, in the clear light of reason and common sense. What effect is this Bill likely to have upon our beloved country? What chance has Ireland of making a living, of paying her way, of raising income and obtaining capital to carry on National affairs and to develop the resources of the country? that is practically the most important question before us. What will be the financial effect of the Bill upon Ireland? I believe the Bill will, in that respect, be entirely disastrous, absolutely ruinous to the country.

WE SHALL START SMOOTHERED IN DEBT.

Let us consider our liabilities first. Ireland owes Great Britain a sum of about £8,650,000 as a direct debt—a sum due without any intermediary between the Irish Exchequer and the Exchequer of Great Britain. This sum is repayable in a term of years, capital and interest, by an annual payment of £360,000. That is the first direct charge upon our estate. But that is not all. Other advances for Land Purchase and various public purposes have been sanctioned, amounting in all to about thirty millions, which are ultimately chargeable upon the Irish Consolidated Fund. To that amount Ireland is in debt to Great Britain. We are, therefore, going to begin business, to set up for ourselves with a debt of about thirty millions hanging over our heads, a debt unsatisfiable, and, in my opinion, unsatisfiable, because I cannot see the smallest possibility of paying off the principal, or even keeping down the interest on that vast sum. We are going to start for ourselves simply smothered in debt. That is not a very hopeful aspect of the case. Well, then, let us see what we shall lose.

HEAVY LOSSES.

Ireland will lose her share in the aggregate Probate Duties of the United Kingdom, amounting to £197,000 a year, assigned to the aid of local taxation by the Local Government Act of 1888, and she will lose £40,000 a year contributed by the Imperial Exchequer to cover possible losses in connection with the Land Purchase Act. That is what we lose, and what shall we be deprived of?

PRESSING CLAIMS AND NO INCOME.

Hitherto Ireland has had the benefit of British credit, the best credit in the world, and has received advances on the most favourable terms that British credit can secure for a variety of purposes. We obtain advances and loans for the purchase of freeholds, for main drainage and reclamation, for the erection of labourers' houses, towards the maintenance of asylums, towards education, science and art, towards the construction of railways, harbours, and docks—in fact, towards everything that is necessary for the industrial prosperity of the people. For the future, not one penny shall we receive for those purposes from that source. Every farthing will have to be found for herself by Ireland, or will not be found at all. All these advances and loans will, after the appointed day, have to be paid out of Irish revenue, or from Irish loans, and will fall upon the Irish Consolidated Fund. How are loans to be obtained? I fancy your chairman under-estimated the case when he suggested as possible that Ireland could borrow money at double the rate of interest that the United Kingdom could borrow it. My impression is that though the United Kingdom can borrow money at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., that Ireland by herself, deprived of the security of Great Britain, would not be able to borrow money on any terms whatever. And now what will our expenses be?

After we have paid for the ordinary civil administrations of the country—and by calculations we are supposed to have just about enough income to do that—we shall find ourselves without revenue, but with pressing claims upon us accruing from various causes. We shall have to provide pensions and compensation for existing civil servants, and for the police; we shall have to provide for the Judiciary and the police force of the future; we shall have to pay a small army of Irish M.P.'s., of various denominations and kinds; we shall have to pay their travelling expenses backwards and forwards between Dublin and London, and for comfortable lodgings for them in London, whenever they may desire to pay a visit to the metropolis; we shall have to maintain a large army of Excise officers, or a little cloud of smoke from a private still will be seen curling up from every hill-side, and our main source of revenue will disappear; and we shall have to keep up an army of Customs officers, or every creek and bay will harbour a smuggling fleet, and we shall find conflicts arising between British Revenue officers and the people, backed by their police—not a very pleasant matter to contemplate. For all these things we shall have to pay in addition to the ordinary expenses of governing the country, and where is the money to come from? Can any man tell me where we are to get the funds to do this? What income can Ireland have? What are her resources? Practically her income would be entirely derived from Excise and from income or property tax. Let us consider the elasticity and solidity of these sources of revenue.

WE MUST FLOAT ON WHISKY.

It appears to me that Excise is a somewhat unreliable source of income with a diminishing population. Its value obviously depends upon the drunkenness of the people, and their drinking capacity depends upon their physical constitution. I daresay our constitutions are very strong, but there are limits to human endurance. It is impossible for any man to consume more than a certain amount of whisky, and nothing but universal individual drunkenness can save us from complete collective insolvency. It is a question whether alcoholic poisoning or national bankruptcy will overtake us first. Surely the Government might have appointed a medical commission of enquiry to try and ascertain what is the maximum capacity of the Irish people for drink ; and they might have set out in a schedule to the Bill how many bottles of whisky per head per day might suffice to keep the nation out of the workhouse, in order that the Irish Legislature might have some idea as to the nature of the criminal code necessary to propose, and of the character of the punishment to be inflicted against temperance and total abstinence. The penalty would needs be severe, because it is perfectly obvious that, under this Bill, temperance would be high treason, and total abstainers would be the most dangerous enemies of the State. Drink we must if this Bill becomes law, and drink to the utmost limit of human endurance, for if the nation is to float at all it is on a sea of whisky that she must swim.

FARMERS TO BE HUGELY TAXED.

Then there remains an income or property tax. My impression is that income will be conspicuous by its absence in a very few years, except, perhaps, in the North ; and if capital remains there it will simply put its back against the wall, and with that politeness that distinguishes the Ulster people, but also with that firmness that is indigenous to the soil, will refuse to pay the tax. You know what the capitalists of the country have said. What do you suppose will become of all the British money in Ireland ? Of the ten millions of money belonging to insurance companies in England for instance ? What will become of all the capital invested in breweries, distilleries, linen manufactures, ship building, and the other industries of the country ? Capital will pluck up her skirts, shake the dust off her feet, and go. Capital will take wings and fly. Insurance companies and other investors will clear out, preferring to realise at a loss rather than risk losing all. Mills, breweries, distilleries, will be closed and removed to Great Britain or some other country. Millions and millions of money will leave Ireland, and thousands and thousands Irishmen and women will be thrown out of work to starve. There will be very little income left in Ireland to lose after a year or two of Home Rule. But you may say there is the land, the land cannot take wings to itself and fly away. That is true. Landowners can be taxed, and suppose they are, and taxed out of existence ? What then ? Will that profit labour, or will it in reality profit anybody ?

Bear in mind that the tax must fall ultimately upon the land. It must fall upon and be borne by owners and occupiers, both great and small alike. It must fall upon the soil itself. How is the farmer to live, much less thrive, with the whole burden of the taxation of the country upon his shoulders—with no assistance from the Imperial Exchequer, deprived of the benefit of British security, and with everything to find for himself? Farmers would find themselves compelled to pay double and treble the taxation that they now do. Perhaps they think they would be compensated for that by getting their land very cheap, or for nothing at all. Perhaps they would get it very cheap, but not so cheap as they expect. The Irish Legislature cannot deal with land at all for three years. The Irish Legislature cannot at any time deal with it, except by due process of law, nor can it deprive any man of his property without just compensation. The estimate of an Irish Legislature of just compensation may be a low one, and their processes of law may be peculiar processes, but you may be sure of this, that nothing in the shape of confiscation would be attempted, because Great Britain, as you know, retains the right of concurrent legislation, and it would not do to stock public opinion in Great Britain too much. Assuming that farmers get their land at the very lowest price at which even the kind of Irish Legislature we are to have could give it to them, they would have to pay compensation for it. Where is the money to come from? British credit and British loans would no longer be available as they are in the Ashbourne and other Acts dealing with Land Purchase. The Irish people would have to find the money for themselves on their own security. The money for compensation could only be obtained at ruinous rates of interest, if it could be obtained at all; and all those interested in land, occupiers and farmers, large and small, may be perfectly certain that with the huge income tax that they would be compelled to pay, and with the enormous addition of local rates consequent upon the withdrawal of Imperial grants and loans, and with the interest on money that the Irish Legislature would have to borrow at usurious rates in order to enable them to purchase their holdings—they would, I say, find themselves paying infinitely more in interest, rates, and taxes, than they are paying now in rent and taxation put together. And what is to be done for the labourers? Do you suppose they will not want land to be provided somehow for them, and money for the purchase and stocking of it? The country could not stand it. The land could not bear the load upon it. This miserable Bill, if it become law, whatever else it would do, would be the ruin of every farmer in the country. It would break the neck of every industry, and crush agriculture to the ground. And now a word as to our borrowing powers.

COULD NOT RAISE A £5 NOTE.

What credit shall we have, what chance of negotiating a loan? How do we stand now in finance? We have the whole resources

of Great Britain at our backs, the best credit in the world available for our needs; any amount of money required for any legitimate purpose can be obtained at a lower rate of interest than is possible in the case of any other community outside the United Kingdom. What could an Irish Parliament do? It is true that an Irish Parliament has before now had fairly good credit. Grattan's Parliament could borrow, and did borrow, money at about 4½ per cent. But how was that Parliament constituted? Entirely of men of property, of men having great interests in the country, the class of men in short that form the Grand Juries of the present day. Property was absolutely secure under that Parliament, and the credit of the country was proportionately good. And Ireland was richer then than now. The long war had put up prices. England was becoming an importer instead of an exporter of Wheat. Wheat growing land in Ireland was worth infinitely more in those days than it is in these, and last, but not least, the whole Executive was in the hands of a British Parliament. That Parliament was ultimately responsible for property, law, life, and liberty. Now it is proposed to place the whole executive, judiciary, magistrates, sheriffs, and police in the hands and under the control of the Legislature in Dublin. And of what elements will that Legislature be composed? Facts cannot be ignored. Capital, property, industrial enterprise, business capacity, are almost exclusively opposed to the policy of repeal. The Irish Legislature will be composed of those men who now represent Ireland in the Imperial Parliament—very able, very talented men doubtless; but it must be admitted, to put the matter as mildly as possible, that their close association with American societies, their own methods of seeking to encompass their ends, their own social and political opinions, and their general attitude towards property and legal obligations, have not been such as to inspire confidence. In the war that they have waged against property they have forgotten one little thing—that the credit of any country and of any community rests absolutely and entirely upon the sacredness and security of its property. They have deliberately deprived Ireland of any possible security, any possible borrowing power that she might otherwise have had. A Legislature so constituted might possibly raise half-a-crown as a matter of charity, but I do not believe that it could raise a £5 note as a loan in all the financial centres of the civilised world.

THE CRAZIEST CONCEPTION.

With a large and unsatisfied debt hanging over our heads, with no income to pledge, no security to offer, no friends to back our bills, what chance should we have of negotiating a loan? We should only subject ourselves in the attempt to the insult of being kicked out into the street as an impudent impostor, and having the door slammed in our faces. To cast Ireland adrift from the solvency, the capital and credit of Great Britain is the craziest conception of the craziest brain. To start her on an independent career as a nation; to set her up in business for herself

without plant, machinery, or credit, is a proposition so childish and pre-eminently absurd that it is almost impossible to realize that it can hold its place for a moment in the estimation of sane men. That is all I have to say on the subject of finance. I will turn for a moment or two to what I consider if possible a more serious aspect of the case—that is to the danger, the infinite danger, of revolution, and of the greatest horror that can happen to any people—civil and religious war.

BLOODSHED FOR IRELAND.

History cannot be ignored in these matters, and history shows that whatever their origin and initial impetus, all what may be called national movements in Ireland degenerate into sectarian strife. There are fires in Ireland smouldering, but not yet extinguished, forces slumbering, but not yet dead : fires that might be kindled into furious activity by a spark ; forces that can only be kept in check by the strong, impartial regulation and control of a United Parliament ; forces and fires that would die down by degrees and expire in time if Ireland were only let alone. But she is not let alone, alas, and the elements of danger are yet alive. Not over much is needed to kindle a conflagration in Ireland that would scorch her from end to end. Just and good men of all classes and all creeds would do all they could, but what could they do to stem the tide of human passion and prejudice that might be let loose. You know the attitude that the plantation counties of Ulster have taken up. They have spoken out their minds. They deny the moral right and legal right of Parliament to break faith with them, and to break the solemn engagement of the Act of Union. They deny that allegiance to a statutory Parliament in Dublin can be imposed upon them, and they assert that, rather than submit, they will oppose force with force. That is civil war. I will not consider—it is immaterial to my purpose—whether Ulster is right or wrong. In my opinion every man has an inalienable right to the Constitution, laws, and liberties under which he was born ; but that is not a practical consideration now. What we have to consider, what every man who loves his country has to consider, is the nature of the elements that have to be dealt with. Right or wrong, these men say that they will not submit, and they will not. Rightly or wrongly, in spite of all that just men may do on both sides, the cleavage will be on religious lines. Race and religion will split the country. Whether Protestant intolerance bring it about, or Catholic intolerance ; whether it be due to race animosities in the North, or race animosities in the South, is of no practical consequence to us. What matter which party is to blame ? It will not be a question to be decided in a court of law, but by the fearful arbitrament of force. The first blood shed, whether justified or unjustifiable, whoever and whatever is the cause, will be the signal for the worst horror that can befall a people—civil and religious war. God knows that no man can wish more earnestly, or pray more earnestly, than I do that this awful calamity may be spared my country ; but this I maintain, and I am justified in maintaining it,

that if it does happen the consequences will be upon the heads of those who are endeavouring to force upon us a measure and to create a situation infallibly certain to bring it about.

DISPUTES WITH ENGLAND.

And there are many other causes of inevitable friction that must arise between the Irish Legislature and the British Parliament. I have only time to allude very briefly to them. Questions connected with the payment of debts, with the collection of customs, and with great Imperial matters, such as peace, war, and neutrality. Suppose that we do not pay our debts, won't pay them, or cannot pay them. What is Great Britain to do? Put a man into possession? That would mean putting a couple of army corps into possession and selling up the country. What is to happen if the customs duties cannot be collected? If their collection is opposed by the people, and the police, and the Legislature? Well, I suppose the Lord Lieutenant will be instructed to collect them, and what is he to do? He might attach the person of his Prime Minister. He might serve writs upon his Cabinet, and sue the whole Irish Legislature. What then? He won't have a single officer of any kind whatever to carry out his warrants and to execute his decrees. You must remember that if this Bill becomes law the Crown, the British Parliament, and the Privy Council, and the Exchequer Judges, and all the other contrivances of the Bill may say whatever they like but they can do nothing. They have no civil process, no constitutional means whatever of carrying out their decrees, judgments, and vetoes, they won't have a single policeman in the country to carry out their behests.

PREPOSTEROUS ABSURDITIES.

Is it unreasonable to suppose that in a great European war in which Great Britain maintained an attitude of neutrality that Ireland might favour one side or the other? How is she to be compelled to remain neutral? What is to prevent her opening her ports to one of the belligerents and closing them to the other? Suppose Great Britain herself to be at war how could she collect her contribution from Ireland? There is absolutely no machinery whatever in the Bill for doing so, and even if machinery were provided what is the good of machinery if there is no hand to set it in motion. There are several checks and safeguards and contrivances in the Bill. There are two Exchequer Judges, for instance, to hear revenue cases, and who can decide whether an act of the Irish Legislature is legal or illegal. Anybody who feels themselves aggrieved can appeal to these Exchequer Judges; and the Bill, with sweetly, touching simplicity, enunciates that if the Exchequer Judges decide that the Irish Legislature has done anything wrong, committed any injustice, they can enforce their judgment by despatching an officer to do so. Well, the officer would be very soon despatched. Nothing shows more clearly the utter absurdity of this Bill than the proposal that two Exchequer Judges should exercise a protecting

influence over the minority by sending out an officer to enforce their decrees in the face of the opposition of the people, and the Legislature, and the whole police force of the country. That is a good example of the preposterous absurdities that this Bill contains.

Then there is the judicial committee of the Privy Council, and the British Parliament has concurrent power of legislation, and, of course, the Crown has the power of veto. But what civil process exists for carrying out the judgments of the Privy Council, for putting in operation the legislation of Parliament, for enforcing the veto of the Crown? None. Absolutely none; nor can any effective administrative means be introduced into the Bill as long as the whole Executive is appointed and controlled by the Irish Legislature. What is the use of all these clauses and contrivances when there is no means of enforcing them? They may serve to deceive the British public who are ignorant; they are simply insulting to the Irish Loyalists who know. They are merely the decorations, the trappings, and plumes of the hearse that is to carry Irish liberties to the grave. Force, military occupation, martial law, constitute the only means whereby the restrictions and safeguards of the Bill can be made operative. The tenure of the Crown will be the tenure of the sword. The will of Parliament, if writ at all, can be written only in letters of blood. I protest against degrading Ireland into this condition of vassalage, into the state of a poor, tribute-paying province; and against the intolerable thraldom involved in thus substituting physical for legal, constitutional action, I vehemently protest.

CIVIL WAR FOR THE WHOLE EMPIRE.

There is only one other point I wish to call your attention to. That is the Imperial aspect of the case. Consider for one moment what may happen. I have alluded to the position that has been taken up by the plantation counties in the North, and you know that offers of assistance to them are being sent from Canada, and from other colonies. If such a terrible calamity befall us as is involved in the repeal of the Union, and civil war ensued, as it undoubtedly would, help would assuredly be sent to the North from Canada and other colonies, and help would probably be sent to the other side from the United States. The whole power of Great Britain could not confine civil war within the limits of this island. Great Britain would find herself confronted with fratricidal strife throughout the whole British Empire. She would not only have to strive to keep the peace here, but she would be compelled to restrain British ships and British subjects from coming to the assistance of one side in Ireland, and foreign ships and foreign men from coming to the assistance of the other side. The whole Empire would be involved in the struggle; and it is more than probable that civil war in Ireland would lead to a great and general European war. Gentlemen, if you come to examine this Bill, even casually, you will be convinced that it involves not only the financial ruin of Ireland, but that it contains within it the seeds of disasters and

catastrophes of the most far-reaching and appalling kind. And can any reasonable man suppose that Ireland would be unmoved amid such a shock of circumstances? Be sure of this, the natural and acquired relationship and community of interests between Ireland and Great Britain and the Empire are too closely interwoven to permit of that. Ireland must acutely feel anything affecting the stability of the Empire and of Great Britain.

ARE WE CATTLE?

Has Parliament any right to inflict these infinite evils upon us, to force upon us this Bill? Has she any right to refuse to fulfil her part of the bargain entered into with our fore-fathers, and which we, their children, wish to fulfil and see fulfilled? If Ireland were absolutely unanimous; if uninfluenced by American agitators, she with one voice speaking from one heart, petitioned for this change, Parliament might then consider whether, in the interests of Great Britain, it was possible to gratify her. But Ireland is not unanimous. A very large and powerful minority, a minority which, it must not be forgotten, contains the major part of the industrial population, and represents the greater portion of the capital and cultivated intelligence of the country, is bitterly opposed to it, and says that to this suicidal and disastrous change it never will be a party, or submit. The power of Parliament to bind and loose may be difficult to gauge. The moral sanction of resistance may be hard to define; but this I will say, that there are principles and rights antecedent to forms of Government. There are moral rights inherent in a community, human rights and privileges, primitive and essential, underlying the whole foundation upon which organized society and systems of government are reared. We are not protesting against an ordinary Act of Parliament, which we even bitterly object to; but we are protesting against being outlawed from that Parliament. We object to having our allegiance transferred from a Parliament and a Constitution which we trust, to a Parliament and a Constitution that we do not trust, and which we will not accept. Allegiance is not a marketable article to be transferred like a bale of goods in satisfaction of a Prime Minister's promises to pay. Free men cannot, in their allegiance, be sold like cattle in the market. There are human rights and human liberties underlying all systems of Parliament or Government, and upon those primary, essential, and primordial rights we take our stand, conscious of the integrity of our position. This Bill never will become law; but if it did, and if its operations were resisted, who could deny that the felony lay with those who wish to rob us of our rights and liberties, and that the treachery and the treason lay on the heads of those who sought to deprive us, unwilling, of the laws and the Constitution of the United Kingdom, whose citizens we are.

CONCLUSION.

They taunt us who hold to the Union as being unpatriotic and untrue to the interests and aspirations of our country. They

arrogate to themselves an exclusive right to the title of patriots ; these men who think that Ireland, poor distracted country, can stand alone. Well, they may be patriots but they are very mistaken patriots to my mind. Nationalists, they call themselves those men who would degrade Ireland from the proud position of equal enjoyment and equal partnership with a great and wealthy nation, and would make of her a ragged, starving, poor relation, cringing for charity, or bullying for black-mail. That is not my idea of patriotism or nationalism. I yield to no man living in my ove for my country. There is not any man alive who has more reverence for her past history and her traditions ; who is more saturated with her legendary lore ; but I am not such an unmitigated fool as to be deluded into founding dreams of an impossible future upon an improbable past. Bitter hatred of England, the dominant passion of those Irish-Americans who, under the guise of friendship, have brought such misery on Ireland, won't put one penny in the Exchequer. Tall talk about the past glories of Ireland won't feed the people. It is not in abstract ideas of national existence that you can clothe and educate them. However fond I may be of the past, I will never forget the necessities of the present day. What does Ireland need ? Her needs and difficulties are not political, they are economic. What Ireland wants is capital. Capital to develop her industries, and to give employment to her people. What is the condition precedent to capital ? Security for property, full sense of the absolute sacredness of property. That is the only thing that will bring the fertilizing stream of capital to our shores and to our industries. I wish my country well. I want to see that security for property which alone can supply the life-giving stream of capital to her undeveloped wealth. I want to see employment for her sons and for her daughters, and that development of industries which British capital alone can effect. And would this Bill do it ? No, indeed. In a few short years after the appointed day—the day of doom for Ireland it would be—her mills would be closed, her manufactories transferred across the Channel, her lands would be untilled, her labour unemployed, her people flying from starvation, suppliants for charity in other lands. This is no class question. Yes, it is a class question to this extent. It is a question that affects every tenant-farmer, every small freeholder, every artisan, and every labourer in the country far more than those who are possessed of capital and wealth in money. Capital can be transferred to more favourable localities, but the population, the people, the labour, of the country cannot. Capital can take care of itself, but who will take care of the people dependent upon that capital ? I love my country far too well to believe in any such nonsense as that contained in this Home Rule Bill. I long to see her prosperous, contented, and happy. I will not sit silent and see her become a pitiful, but not a pitied mendicant, among nations. I will never agree to a measure which will bring degradation upon my country, ruin to her industries, and misery upon her people. I only wish I could make my voice heard by my fellow-countrymen all

through the South and West. I only wish that I could appeal to them, to their sense, and to their patriotism; their sense of what is due and necessary for themselves, and to their love for their country. I would appeal to them to retain for Ireland what is now her's through participation in the wealth and strength and power of Great Britain. I would appeal to them not to reduce her from the present proud and honest position of equal partnership, equal right, and equal responsibility in the present and future of the United Kingdom, and of the greatest empire that the world has ever seen, into that of a tribute-paying province, a wretched poverty-stricken hanger-on, begging for charity where now she has the right to ask for help. I protest against the Bill because it would over-turn civil society, because it will bring financial ruin upon my country, and because it will let loose forces of disorder that the Irish Legislature will not be able to cope with. I denounce it because it involves the forfeiture of our liberties, civil and religious, the destruction of our industries, and the beggary and bankruptcy of Ireland; and as long as I have got a voice to raise I will raise it against a Bill which will bring ridicule, disgrace, and disaster upon the country I love so well.



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